

J/P HRO and Build Change, advocating community involvement

On Monday, June 3rd at Montana Hotel, J/P HRO along with its partner, Build Change, held a press conference to showcase their progress and explain their mission to the press and the public at large.

●●The Jenkins/Penn Haitian Relief Organization (J/P HRO) started work with camp cities in Pétion-Ville and Cité Maxo shortly after the earthquake. It was noted that many people in the Pétion-Ville camps were former residents of Delmas who had been forced to flee their homes after they had been destroyed or stamped yellow (in need of repair)

by the Ministry of Public Works, Transportation and Communication (MTPTC in French). J/P HRO then decided to focus their relocation and rehabilitation project in the Delmas 32 area. "We thought it would be better to focus our efforts in one area where we make a larger positive impact, rather than spread ourselves thin, and do little here and there," explained Gary Philoctète, J/P HRO's National Director.

Noll Tufani, Build Change's Program Director in Haiti, explained their joint mission with J/P HRO. Both organizations believe in a hands-on approach by beneficiaries in order to ensure that the aid recipients are truly satisfied with their



J/P HRO's Guy Laroche and Gary Philoctète along with Build Change's Noll Tufani and Romelus Raynald

homes rather than merely handed something that may or may not meet their needs. When the decision is made to reinforce a house that has

been stamped yellow by MPTC, there are several ways to approach the issue, depending on the resident's needs or the type of house, which determines what needs to be done. Build Change has worked intimately with MPTC in order to establish new guidelines that went into law to ensure that houses being repaired are not given a quick patchwork job to make them esthetically pleasing, but rather structurally reinforced in order to make them anti-seismic.

This relocation project works by identifying the most vulnerable individuals, single mothers, the elderly, handicapped etc. and involving them from the beginning by setting up an account with recipients for the amount allotted by the budget to make repairs. "People could decide to run off with the money once the account is set up, but we haven't had anyone do that, they trust us, and trust that we will provide them with a structurally sound home," stated Mr. Tufani. The program focuses on social engineering, strongly believing that it is most important to help people help themselves. Once several construction technicians have been trained in new ways to build, even after J/P HRO and Build Change leave, the knowledge will remain and those men and women will be able to continue to help their communities with these life saving new skills. This in turn makes them more marketable as laborers, and they will then be able to teach this skill set to others in their field, helping to propagate that knowledge. This creates

a symbiotic relationship between community members and skilled workers from the community who have been trained by Build Change engineers.

In order to qualify for assistance from J/P HRO, candidates must have a title for the house that will be worked on, program representatives then determine eligibility based on vulnerability and current living conditions; the house's location, nothing is built on unsafe terrain; and the overall cost, a \$2,200 budget is allocated per home, and a rental fee is sometimes provided to temporarily relocate residents as their homes are being repaired.

J/P HRO partnered with Build Change for this relocation program with financing from the World Bank's Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) the Clinton/Bush Foundation and the Aid for Development Program's Bureau of Monetization (BMPAD in French), among others. J/P HRO has already relocated 280 families and is currently working on relocating another 100. They have also repaired and reinforced ^{twc} schools. J/P HRO also provides security, healthcare and basic social needs to the inhabitants of the camps in their care.

By Isabelle Vasquez

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